



**Chris Danou's Capitol Report**  
Republicans Stall Budget Process in Madison

Every two years the Wisconsin State Legislature works on, debates and ultimately passes the Governor's biennium budget. The budget process begins when the Governor introduces the document that funds state government and important projects for the next two years. This is an important document and part of the democratic process that typically takes around four or five months to finish and needs to be finalized by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, that deadline has come and gone.

Deadlines are a part of life that we all are expected to meet. Whether it's for our children and completing school projects, individuals filing their taxes, paying bills or things getting done at work or in everyday life, deadlines are put in place for a reason and they should be respected. There are some dates that people have respected for years, like filing taxes by April 15<sup>th</sup> and Wisconsin State Government has been no different for decades with the fiscal year ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The Governor and Republicans in the Assembly and Senate have known about this deadline for months and clearly haven't done the work to meet it.

Unlike those who file their income taxes late or anyone else who fails to turn something in on time, there won't be any real consequences for not meeting the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Our government won't shut down and lawmakers won't face a late fee, downgrade, or negative mark on their credit report, but it certainly doesn't instill faith in the ability of the Governor or the Republican majority to effectively govern.

Even though Wisconsin State Government won't experience a shutdown like we've come to expect in Washington, it's still troubling that the Governor and Republican majority can't come to a consensus on this important piece of legislation that keeps our state moving forward for the next two years. Yes, our state government will just continue being funded at 2013-2015 levels, but not having the budget signed into law brings uncertainty and shows the inability to govern.

People might not always agree on policy or ideology, but they need to find ways to communicate, compromise and get things done. A few months ago, the Governor said he expected the legislature to be finished working on the budget by the end of May and he would sign it into law shortly after that time. As of this week, the Joint Committee on Finance hasn't met for the last month to finish its work on the document and send it to both houses for a full floor debate and vote. It's hard to say for certain how much longer this will take, but it's clear we're very far behind where we should be and even further behind than where the Governor would like to be.

While there are many reasons for the impasse on the budget, it's fair to say part of the reason is because our Governor has been traveling around the country courting donors and giving speeches as he gears up for his likely presidential run. Having an absent Governor isn't helping Republicans in the Assembly or Senate reach an agreement, and as a result, Republicans in Wisconsin are looking more and more like Republicans in Washington. They're ineffective and simply aren't able to work together and make necessary decisions.

Taxpayers in Wisconsin expect lawmakers – especially when there's one-party control – to be able to get things done and govern. Unfortunately, the Governor and legislative Republicans have shown their inability to make decisions and govern on behalf of the people across the state. With the deadline passed, it's time for lawmakers, especially those in the majority party, to show they can work amongst themselves to get the budget done. We all deserve better than this and I hope there's some progress this week so we can keep our state moving forward for another two years.

